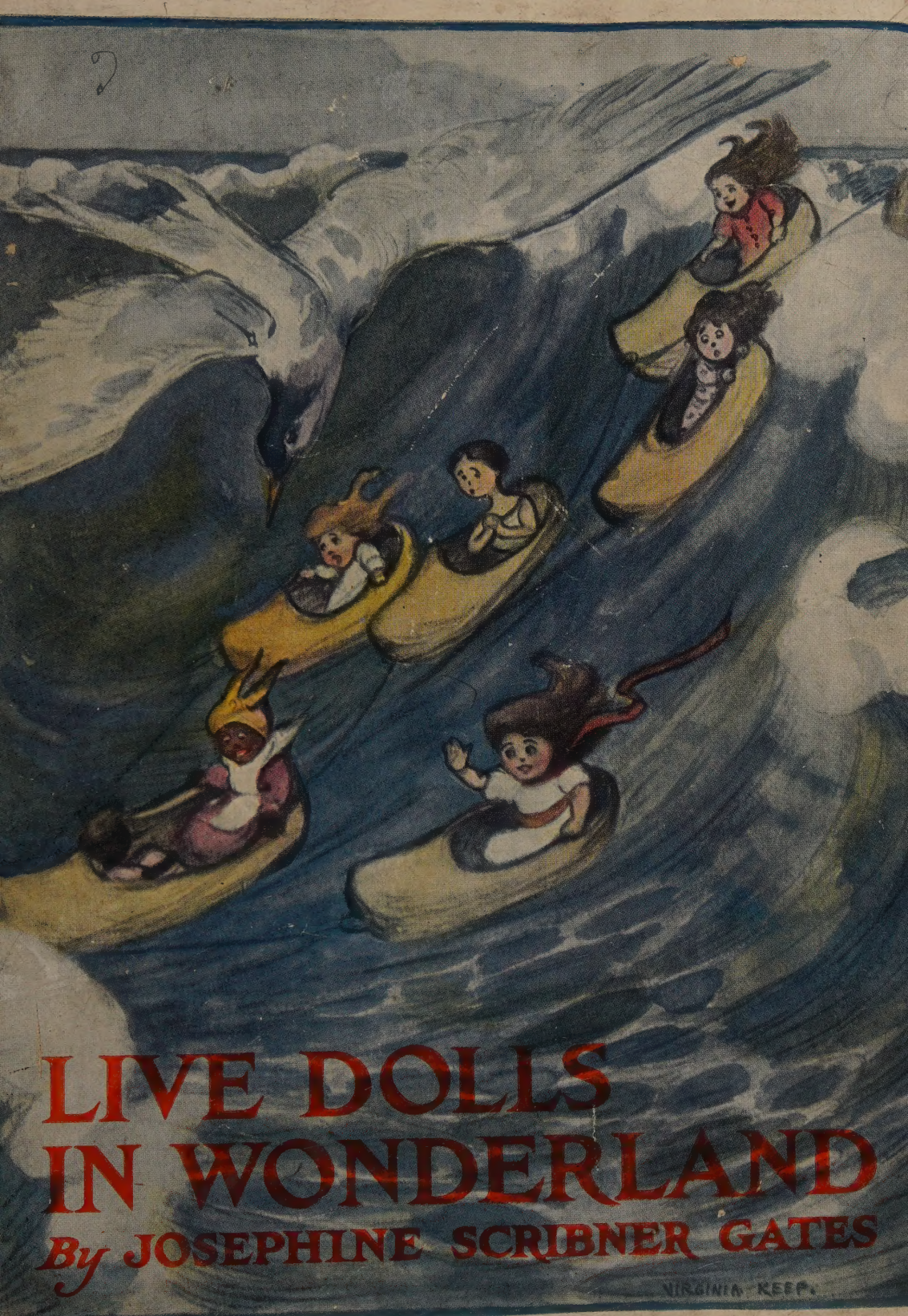

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By JOSEPHINE SCRIBNER GATES

VIRGINIA KEEP.

THE LIVE DOLLS IN WONDERLAND

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"Pray tell me who are you?"

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By
JOSEPHINE
SCRIBNER GATES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
VIRGINIA KEEP

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THE LIVE DOLLS IN WONDERLAND

TO

THE WEE LIVE DOLL WHO LATELY DANCED INTO GRANDMOTHER'S HEART—"OUT OF THE EVERYWHERE INTO HERE."

J. S. G.

THE LIVE DOLLS IN WONDERLAND

CHAPTER I

WHAT *do* you s'pose the Live Dollies did next?

Such a fine thing, and it was such a joke on them for they didn't know a word about it till they had done it!

THE LIVE DOLLS

Simply because they were sound asleep at the time!

They went to sea in the queerest little boats you ever saw!

Of course, you know the story of "The three wise men of Gotham, who went to sea in a bowl," and you know they weren't so wise after all, because their boat was so frail their story was hardly worth telling.

Now our Live Dolls knew better than to go to sea in bowls. They chose such strong boats and such queer ones, I doubt if the red book can hold all the story, but we are going to do our best to crowd it in, and so we'll begin.

Once upon a time the Live Dolls and

their mothers spent a summer at the seashore.

One morning as they were rolling about on the sand, watching the waves creeping toward them, they heard afar off the whirring of an automobile. As it came nearer, they saw it held a very strange load.

"What are they?" cried Janie, as she ran to meet the car piled high with some sort of wooden things.

"They look like wooden shoes," said Lucile. "The one on top is rocking as though something were in it."

"Listen! It's the trumpet, and there *she* is! Oh, the dear precious Queen!"

And there she was, snugly hidden away

in one of the wooden shoes, such as every child in Holland clumps around in.

Up popped her head, showing such dancing mischievous eyes as you never saw!

The children shouted for joy, for they well knew what it meant to have the Queen with them again.

"What have you in the car?" they cried, after giving her the usual warm welcome. "Are they shoes for us to wear?"

"Indeed not!" laughed the Queen. "They are boats made of wood. They are exactly like the shoes the Holland children wear. A strong rope is attached

to each one and they will sail just like real boats. Come and try them."

In great excitement the children drew the boats to the water's edge, and in a twinkling the blue surface was dotted with the wee shoes.

"Let the dolls get in! They will just fit!" cried Janie.

The boats were drawn ashore, the dollies tumbled into them, and away they went, dancing about in the greatest glee on the tumbling waves.

"What fun!" cried Rosabell, "I wish they would let go of the ropes; then we could have a long, long ride."

"You all scare me stiff!" cried Dinah.

"Don' nobody dast let go no rope on my boat!"

The children shouted with laughter at Dinah, who looked like a scared chicken.

"Don't be afraid, we won't let you go," said the Queen. "I think you can have great fun with your boats. This is such a beautiful place to sail them."

And indeed it was a glorious place, not only to sail boats, but to play.

The beach was hard and smooth; the water blue as the sky, with just enough suds on its surface to make it a bit exciting as the waves curled about the children's bare feet.

Each day seemed to bring something new, and this boat-day was best of all.

Even Dinah came to love the boats, and she and Topsy had great sport; one seated in the heel, the other in the toe of one boat, sailing about like Egyptian queens.

"Heel, toe, and away we go!" sang Dinah one day as they lazily floated on the placid blue.

"I just been wishin' I could find a prominent place for the summer. Now I'se got it!"

"Goosie! you mean permanent," said Topsy.

"It don't make no diff'runce which I mean. I'se got 'em bof now, and I'se goin' to keep 'em, an' live on the water all summer."

This she almost did, as you will see.

THE LIVE DOLLS

"Let's have a picnic," cried Janie, one morning. "We'll get frosted raisin cakes and currant buns. Take our umbrellas and sweaters and stay as late as we want to."

And so presently there appeared a troop of girls and Live Dolls, each armed with basket, sweater and umbrella.

Away they went, drawing their beloved boats across meadows and through the pine woods, till they found a dear little sandy beach.

Here the girls tied the boats securely together, and leaving the dolls to guard them, they went in search of a spring.

"Let's climb into the boats," suggested

Dinah. "Come, Topsy, let's pretend we are going on a journey."

In a moment they were in their heel and toe seats, while the other dolls sought their favorite boats.

"Oh!" cried Rosabell. "Let's play they are house-boats. Lots of people live in them. Let's pretend it's night and time to go to bed. The lunch baskets can be our cupboards. When we get up we'll have breakfast."

And so presently Dinah and Topsy, curled up in their shoe boat, were no longer pretending, but were really and truly going on a journey, for the water began to creep about the little boats, slowly

and surely, till suddenly they were all afloat.

Neither did their companions have to pretend sleep, for as the strange little boats drifted on and on, rocking so gently, the dollies drifted with them off into dreamland, while the water sang a lullaby. Oh, such a beautiful drowsy tune as you never heard!

By and by a silvery bird sailed across the sky, spied the boats, darted down and hovered just above them.

Then he settled on one and gazed curiously at the tiny black faces pillowed on fat cushioned arms.

Next he caught sight of the basket, and

with his bill pulled off the paper napkins. His beady eyes glistened as he saw the raisin cookies. He tweaked one from its snowy bed, then turned to the brown bun, from which a plump currant poked its head.

He gobbled that up just as Dinah and Topsy wakened and stared in amazement at their silvery guest.

Then they raised their heads and looked about them.

All they could see was water, while the waves gently lapped the little boat.

"Topsy," cried Dinah in alarm, "where are we? And where did that beautiful bird come from?"

"I dunno," replied Topsy. "Looks like you wuz gettin' your wish, a prominent and permanent place on the water.

"Dose other dolls seems to be fast asleep. I wish this bird could talk."

"Oh!" cried Dinah, excitedly, "I have the wand the Queen gave me once. You 'member I lost it when the bears came to life. I found it and stuck it in my bosom. It will make a Live Doll of the bird. I think that would be fun. Perhaps it can then tell us where we are."

Out came the magic wand, and as it flashed in the sunlight the bird was transformed into a beautiful doll gowned in shimmering silvery gauze.

It still perched on the front of the shoe

and cocked its head with such a puzzled expression, the dolls laughed aloud.

At this sound a head appeared at the top of each little shoe boat, while a chorus of voices shouted, "Where are we, and where did that lovely doll come from?"

"I'm not a doll," replied Silver Bird. "I am a bird and as I was sailing high up in the air, I saw these queer little boats all in a clump. So I came down to examine them.

"Then I saw the basket and I peeped under the cover and saw some funny white mounds with big fat bugs sticking their heads out. I ate one. Next I saw some brown stones with little fat bugs sticking their heads out, and I ate one of them. I

hope you won't mind. I am fond of all kinds of bugs but I never ate any quite like these.

"You are all so small I s'pose you are a race of dwarfs. Do you eat creatures in your food, and are they alive when you put them in?"

The dolls laughed heartily at this speech, and Dinah hastened to explain.

"They aren't bugs at all. The big ones we call raisins; the small ones are currants. You may eat lunch with us if you like; we are all hungry."

Out came the baskets, which were soon emptied. As the last crumb vanished Silver Bird asked how they happened to be out on the water all alone.

"We don't know," replied Rosabell.

"We are Live Dolls and we went to sleep in the boats on the shore. Our mothers left us there while they went to get a drink from Sparkling Spring.

"How do *you* think we came here?"

"The tide came up, of course. They were very careless to leave the boats so near the shore.

"How came you to be able to turn me into a doll?"

"Oh," cried Dinah, "I have the wand. I can turn you back and forth just easy as pie.

"Isn't the wind getting awful windy?" she asked suddenly as the boats began to rock vigorously.

"It is, indeed!" said Silver Bird.

"But what can we do?" cried Rosabell in alarm.

"Do as I tell you and you will be perfectly safe. Raise your umbrellas and hold them back of you. The wind will carry you safe to an island. See that black speck over there?"

Overjoyed at the thought of landing, the dollies obeyed, and as Silver Bird said, the tiny craft scudded across the water while the speck grew larger and larger till—"Why, here we are!" all chorused, as a big wave sent the boats high and dry on the land.

"Let's tie them to this log and I will show you about," said Silver Bird. "No

one knows of this place. I wish we could get around without having them see us."

"We can," cried Rosabell, "I have my wand that makes us invisible."

She drew it forth in breathless eagerness, waved it on high, and in a moment the little band was turned into airy nothingness.

"Fine!" exclaimed Silver Bird. "Now we can go about comfortably and see all we want to and disturb no one."

They followed Silver Bird over the rocks, till finally from the top of a very high one there was disclosed to them what seemed to be a tiny village.

Such queer little houses and narrow streets they had never seen.

"See if you can tell what village it is," said Silver Bird, as they hastened on.

"What a funny old woman that is standing in front of the biggest house of all! See her high-pointed hat and queer red gown!" cried Rosabell excitedly.

"Oh, and look at her funny shoes; they curl up like skates!"

"Look at that funny man! He's stealing meat from the butcher shop!"

"And see the little boy wheeling a girl in a wheelbarrow!"

"And there's another boy eating pumpkin, and he's got a girl in the other half of it!"

These exclamations came from the vari-

ous dolls as the scenes described appeared before them.

"Look in this window," said Silver Bird.

They peered in, to see a King busily counting his money.

Peeping into the kitchen, they beheld the Queen in her gorgeous robes, gobbling up bread and honey as fast as she could.

In the garden was a maid hanging out clothes, when suddenly there flew above her a blackbird.

At this sight Dinah screamed so loud that the bird swerved and flew away.

"Along came a blackbird and tweaked off her nose," cried Rosabell, "but he

didn't quite. She can thank Dinah that she still owns a nose."

"What is that verse from?"

"I know," cried Topsy, "it's from *Mother Goose.*

"That's who it was we saw first. She lives in that house, and these are her people. What fun!"

"You are right," said Silver Bird.

"Look in this house and you will see 'Old King Cole, the merry old soul.'

"Over the way is the Baker man who pat-a-cakes all day long.

"In that hen-coop yonder is 'The black Hen who lays eggs for gentlemen.'

"Listen to the 'Ding dong bell,' and see 'Tommy Green and Tommy Trout.'

" 'What a naughty boy was that to try and kill poor pussy-cat!' "

"Let's help get it out!"

They all paused beside the well. Silver Bird whispered to Dinah to turn him into a bird, then down he fluttered, soon to appear with pussy-cat in his beak.

He gently placed her on the ground, and away she trotted as contentedly as though she had never seen a well.

The boys seemed much surprised at the sight of Silver Bird, and more so when he disappeared so suddenly as he wandered on with the dolls.

"What's that funny boy all dressed in green, and what's he picking?" asked Topsy.

"I know! It's 'Peter Piper picking a peck of pickled peppers,' " shouted Rosabell.

"There's Tommy Tucker and Jack Horner in a corner having a party with their bread and butter and Christmas pie."

"Here comes 'Simple Simon watching for the pieman.' "

"Look over in that meadow!" cried Rosabell. "There's a little fellow all dressed in blue, fast asleep by the haycock. Can it be Little Boy Blue? I didn't really believe he would sleep at his post!"

"What's dat nigga doin'?" cried Dinah, as Topsy jumped over the fence, ran to the

little blue boy, seized his horn and blew a terrific blast.

The little fellow sprang to his feet, gazed around him in wonder, then sighed, "I dreamed it. The cows aren't in the corn at all!" Then he lay down for another nap, while our little band went merrily on its way toward a high, high hill.

CHAPTER II

SUDDENLY they shouted with laughter. Who could help it? For there were Jack and Jill tumbling down-hill with the water pouring in floods all over them.

"I'm goin' to find out the truth about

this," cried Dinah, as she hastened to the foot of the hill.

"Did you really break your crown, Mr. Jack?" she asked timidly.

With a roguish look, Jack nodded his head and held up a gilded paper crown all crushed and broken.

"Yes," he said, "but I've bushels of them. I don't mind. Indeed, we think it's fun, don't we, Jill? Now tell me, are you a person or just a voice?"

"Oh," laughed Dinah, "I forgot! I'm a voice now but I can be a person at the same time, too."

She motioned to Rosabell, who twirled her wand, and Jack and Jill gazed in astonishment at the black vision.

"Where *did* you come from?" they cried in chorus.

"Oh, from far away. Now you see me, and now you don't. Good-by, and thank you for telling me the truth about your crown."

Away went Dinah and her companions, leaving Jack and Jill to climb the hill, wondering much over what they had seen.

"See that little girl carrying a crook!" cried Silver Bird. "She seems quite downcast.

"Do you see why? The sheep following her are bleating piteously. They have no tails. See them tumbling over one another, and dear, dear, there are the tails all hanging out on that bush to dry!

"Did you really break your crown, Mr. Jack?"

"Make me into a bird and I'll get all the tails and tie them on with sweet grass."

And so presently the bleating ceased. Bo-Peep and the sheep went happily on their way, while our little band ran after a sleek pussy-cat.

" 'Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where *have* you been?' " cried Rosabell, with twinkling eyes.

To her astonishment came the answer quick as a wink:

"I've been to London to visit the Queen."

"Did you truly frighten a mouse under her chair?"

"Indeed I did, and she invited me to

come often, and fed me milk out of a gold saucer."

This dialogue was interrupted by shrill wails from children.

"Look over this fence," cried Silver Bird. "It's the 'Old Woman who lived in her shoe and had so many children she didn't know what to do.'

"Poor little babies, let's take her whip from her with the wand."

The wand flashed, the whip disappeared, while the old woman gazed in astonishment at her empty upraised hand, then at the weeping tots.

"Give them some bread
And kiss them instead."

sang Silver Bird in shrill tones.

The old woman's face lighted up, and wonderingly she obeyed.

The sobs turned to laughter and when the babes had eaten every crumb they snuggled down into the shoe, and our little band left them asleep.

"Shows what kindness can do," said Silver Bird. "They will never cry again because she can never find her stick, and she won't use any other."

"Can't she use her hand?" asked Topsy.

"Mercy, no! She would never think of that!"

"Look in this doorway, there's Polly Flinders. I want to talk to her and her mother, too."

The dollies listened as the mother came

forward to whip her little daughter for spoiling her nice new clothes.

"Don't!" came to their ears in silvery tones. "Don't whip her!"

In astonishment the mother looked in vain for the owner of the voice as she replied in distress:

"But see! Her best Sunday go-to-meeting dress and her blue socks and her slippers, all brand-new!"

"Yes, but did you ever have awful cold feet? If you did, you didn't care for anything till they were warm."

Then to Polly Flinders Silver Bird said gravely, "You really should be more careful. Don't get so close to the fire next

time for I can't always be around to warn you."

Polly Flinders drew her chair away, pulling her little skirts close about her. She perked out the broad blue bows, while the dollies raced on down the street.

" 'Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,' " sang Silver Bird, as these personages now appeared.

"See the cow jumping over the moon, and, oh, do hear that cunning curly dog laugh, and there goes the dish waving the spoon high in the air!"

"Oh!" cried Rosabell, turning from this fascinating scene, "see the old woman sweeping the cobwebs from the sky! She

doesn't know it, but she must have the very first flying-machine that ever was."

"Who's this old woman with the thin, thin dog following her?"

"It's Mother Hubbard. I hope she'll find a bone in her cupboard," cried Dinah, much troubled over the poor starved dog.

"She will," said Silver Bird. "I always s'prise her with one when I visit this place.

"Hark to that song!"

All paused and listened to hear, chanted in sweet tones:

"If all the world were apple-pie,
And all the sea were ink,
And all the trees were bread and cheese,
What *would* we have for drink?"

"Now peep through these holes in the

wall," whispered Silver Bird, as the music ceased.

Each dolly peeped, and cried excitedly:

"Oh! Oh! See the apple-pies spinning like tops, all around the edge of that black sea. And see what's growing on those trees. Loaves of bread and cheese-cakes! Isn't that the queerest garden you ever saw?"

"It is, indeed," replied Silver Bird. "Let's go in and taste some of their goodies!"

As he spoke he pulled a rope; a bell sounded "ding-dong—ding-dong." Slowly a great gate opened. They entered and the gate clanked and closed behind them.

"Those pies look pretty fine," said Dinah. "Do you s'pose they are as flaky as mine?"

"You know," laughed Silver Bird, " 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating of it.' Try them; you are welcome to all you can eat."

The dollies hastened to accept this generous invitation, for they were growing quite hungry.

"Perfectly elegant!" cried Dinah. "And may we taste the bread and cheese?"

In reply Silver Bird picked the strange fruit from the low branches and tossed them into the upraised hands.

"I'm thirsty," said Topsy. "Must we drink ink?"

"Indeed not," replied Silver Bird. "That tiny lake is the most delicious berry juice you ever tasted. The keeper thinks it is ink and sells it for that."

As he talked, Silver Bird taught them how to fold a leaf into the shape of a cup so they all made cups and found the drink most refreshing.

"Now come this way and see the Ten Little Indians you have read about."

The dollies followed their leader and found the ten little men standing like soldiers, disappearing as by magic, just as the poem said; then on they went to find what more was in store for them.

"Oh, look up there on the branch of that tree!" cried Rosabell.

"There's a cradle, and oh! I see a baby's head sticking up. *Is* that poor little Rockaby Baby waiting for the wind to blow and the bough to break?"

"Yes," said Silver Bird, "and I don't believe she will drop, for the bough won't break again."

As he talked he skilfully fastened a second branch to the one on which the cradle rested. This he bound securely with a strong vine, and away they all went glad in the thought that the line, "Down comes baby, cradle and all," would never again be true, and baby could swing in her cradle bed to her heart's content.

"Mercy! mercy!" screamed Dinah suddenly, "here come the three blind mice,

and not a chair to stand on! I'm skeered to death of 'em!" and she gathered up her skirts and pranced around in the greatest distress.

At once the skirts of all the dollies were gathered up, while Silver Bird threw back his head and shouted with laughter.

"They can't hurt you. They are dear little soft cushiony creatures. Come to that stone wall," he cried.

They followed and scrambled up, only to find themselves all in a heap in a moment.

"That's no stone wall," said Rosabell. "That must be the one made from pie crust. It is, for see, the windows are made of black puddings and white."

"And slated with pancakes, you ne'er saw the like," cried Topsy, who had slyly nibbled.

"Mayn't we eat a window pane, please?"

"Why certainly, help yourselves," replied King Boggen, the owner of this Pancake-Pie-Crust-Black-and-White-Pudding Palace. I'm sorry I have no sirup, but since I can not see you, you may be only voices, and voices do not need to eat sirup."

The dolls giggled as they helped themselves to windows and walls, and again hastened on their way.

"Here's the Queen of Hearts, baking tarts. I think she won't mind if we take

one, since the King steals them anyway," said Silver Bird.

"Oh, here's Ladybug, Ladybug, flying away. Let's follow her and see if her little house is really burning up with the children in it!" cried Topsy.

Away they all scampered up-hill and down to find presently the tiny house just beginning to flame.

Silver Bird ran to a near-by spring and was back in a twinkling, carrying a leaf cup brimful of water which soon quenched the fire.

As Ladybug gratefully snuggled her babies and wondered what put out the fire, the dollies hurried on to see—*what* do you s'pose?

THE LIVE DOLLS

Nothing more nor less than the five little pigs! One, bravely starting off to market, waved a good-by kiss to the little wife pig who stayed at home and cooked the roast beef for the little pig who ate it.

The dollies peeped into the window to see the little pig who had none standing by, watching wistfully to see if by any chance he might get a wee morsel.

"Why did he have none?" asked Rosabell.

"Because he wasn't willing to work to get it.

"See, coming down the street, the wee one crying 'cause it can't find its way home. Its eyes are so full of tears it doesn't even see it is running straight

there. Now the mother hears. See, she is going to meet it."

A rollicking shout filled the air as the wee pig ran straight into its mother's arms.

"Who's this racing up the street?" cried Rosabell, as a tiny girl ran swiftly past them.

"Oh, that's only Miss Muffet running away from the spider who sat down beside her. He wasn't going to hurt her. He only wanted to see what she was eating. When he found it was curds and whey, he went away because he didn't care for them.

"Just for a moment look through this fence at Contrary Mary and her cockle-

shells and silver bells. See the shy pretty maids in their spring bonnets.

"Now," continued Silver Bird, "here we are back to our boats. Shall we go on?"

"Where to?" asked Rosabell. "And won't our mothers be troubled about us?"

"Make yourselves visible and comfortable, while Dinah changes me into a bird once more. I'll sail across the sky in a jiffy and tell you all about them."

And in a moment he spread his silvery wings and flew away, only to return shortly with the news that their mothers were seated about the spring chattering like magpies.

"They think you are still guarding the boats, and you may as well go on with me.

I'll keep watch of them and get a message to them somehow when they learn that you have sailed away."

The dollies joyfully climbed into their boats, and on they went across the blue water, eager to see the wonders of the next island.

CHAPTER III

AS they scudded along over the rippling waves, Silver Bird perched on the toe of one shoe after another, preening his feathers, cocking his head this way and that, tilting the um-

brellas at just the right angle till land again hove in sight.

Then he flew straight to Dinah, standing before her in such a very funny pose that she and Topsy bubbled over with laughter.

"He wants to be a doll again so he can tell me something," cried Dinah, waving her wand.

"Of course I do," cried the silvery boy doll, bowing politely. "We are coming to the island, and I want to tell you about it.

"It is called Story Island. See if you can guess the stories when you see the people.

"We won't be invisible this time. We

shall have more fun, I think, to see and be seen."

As before, a wave carried the little boats ashore. The dolls jumped from them, tied them all securely, then on they went, led by Silver Bird.

"We are coming to a deep, dark, cool woods. I love it!" cried Rosabell. "What's here to see?"

"My dear dolly, don't talk so loud," whispered Silver Bird. "Follow me on tippie toes."

And so they formed a procession, tiptoeing along, pausing occasionally to listen.

Presently Silver Bird stopped, held up a tiny finger, pointing ahead.

They all looked to see—what? Why, just a little girl dressed in a red coat and hood, carrying a basket.

"Hide!" whispered Silver Bird.

They jumped behind trees and stood as still as mice while the child passed them, singing merrily as she occasionally plucked wild flowers.

"Watch!" exclaimed Silver Bird under his breath, as a wolf hurried toward her, politely bowed and held out his hand for her basket.

"Dear! Dear!" cried Topsy, "I b'lieve my soul it's dat dar Red Ridin' Hood. I should think she'd know better by this time than to let him eat her!"

"You will find he doesn't eat her," said

Silver Bird. "He's going another road. Let's follow her."

And so they did, very quietly, till they saw ahead of them Grandmother's house.

Little Red Riding Hood knocked; the door opened, and she entered.

"Now use your invisible wand and let us go in and see what happens."

Rosabell hastily waved her wand, and the invisible dollies crowded into a corner of the little house, their bright eyes watching every detail of this interesting performance.

Grandmother was stirring something in a huge kettle, from which issued delicious fumes.

"Is the molasses candy ready for Mr. Wolf?" piped Red Riding Hood.

"Just ready," said Grandmother as she poured it into the dish pan and set it on a table beside the bed.

"He came and knocked. I peeped out of the window to be sure it wasn't you. When I saw him I kept perfectly still. He thought I had gone away. So he lay down away over there by that tree to take his nap.

"Listen! He has wakened, I hear him now. Come under the bed with me."

And so Grandmother and Red Riding Hood crawled under the bed, pulling the covers well down in front.

The door opened slowly; in walked Mr. Wolf.

The dollies watched breathlessly as he crept stealthily toward the bed.

As he passed the table he paused, sniffed, then with one great cry he plunged his head into the sticky mass.

His teeth closed on it, but would not open. With a howl of rage away he went out of the door, crashing through the underbrush as he made his way to his den.

The little house rang with laughter as Grandmother and Red Riding Hood crawled from their hiding-place.

"He looked as though he had a new spring hat," said Grandmother. "He is so

fond of sweets he forgets what happens when he tries to get the candy. I s'pose he'll do that to the end of time. Each time I walk through the woods I find an empty pan where he has finally shaken it loose.

"Now, we will have our tea-party, for I surely smell cheese-cakes."

As Grandmother set the table, Silver Bird and the Dollies hurried away.

When they were well out of sight Rosabell waved her wand and they had a rollicking time over the funny incident.

"What a good way to have it end," said one dolly.

"Much better than the old way, I am sure," said Silver Bird. "Nowadays we

don't believe in bad endings to stories or anything else.

"See ahead of you that snug little house. Come and let us see who lives there."

The dollies walked quietly to the half open door, tapped, listened, but heard no sound.

"Come in," said Silver Bird. "I know who lives here, and since the door is open they won't care if we look about."

They walked into the kitchen, in one corner of which stood a tiny stove.

"They've left their dinner cookin' in three bowls," cried Dinah, as she tiptoed across the room and peered into them. She sniffed the steam, then exclaimed with sparkling eyes:

"Porridge done to a turn! Shall we taste it?"

"Mercy no!" declared Topsy, "don't yo'all know where you is now? Look at those bowls! There's a large one, a middle-sized one and a weenty teenty one!

"I'm agoin'. In a moment you'll see three bears comin' in that door. You won't hear 'em, you'll just plain see 'em!"

"Don't go," laughed Silver Bird. "They are all out for a walk.

"Dinah, you'll fall into that bowl if you don't look out. Come and see the three chairs."

Dinah, who had climbed on to a stool and was almost standing on her head, trying to see if Silver Hair had left even a

drop of porridge in the small bowl, couldn't resist scraping the bottom of it with her finger and touching it to her tongue.

"Oh," she cried, "it's fine, just salty enough. I don't blame Silver Hair for eatin' it all. I s'pose she comes every day and gobbles it up."

She turned to follow her companions, but as they had disappeared, she hesitated a moment, then what do you s'pose? She sang softly to herself:

" 'Some like it hot, some like it cold,' but I don't care how it is, I like it anyhow," and she raised the middle-sized bowl and drank and drank till she had swallowed every drop.

Then she ran into the next room to find

them all exclaiming over the three chairs. The smallest toppled over on the broken leg, looking so pathetic, Rosabell said, "I think it's too bad the baby bear hasn't any chair to sit in. Silver Hair ought to have been more careful!"

"Come up-stairs," cried Silver Bird. "If she is there we shall see her."

They followed him up the winding stairway into the room where the three beds were.

They had to climb on to a chair to see on top of the big high one, but no Silver Hair was there.

Then they stood on tiptoe to see if she were on the middle-sized bed—but no Silver Hair was there.

Then they walked softly over to the corner where stood the wee bed.

After one glance, Rosabell squealed with delight, for there she truly lay looking like a frightened bird.

Her curly locks were all over her face like a silver curtain through which the onlookers could see two big blue eyes wide with fear.

"Don't be afraid," said Silver Bird kindly, "we aren't the bears."

"Oh, I'm so glad! I come every day. I get so hungry for their good porridge and I love to sit in the wee chair. It is such fun to hear it creak and break. Then down I go. By that time I'm *so* sleepy I can hardly wait to try their beds."

"But why do you choose the Little Bear's things always?" asked Rosabell. "Don't you s'pose he'd like them himself?"

Silver Hair shouted with laughter at this question, then replied:

"The fact is the little bear is *so* pleased because I like his the best, and the other two are always hoping I'll choose theirs next time, they can hardly wait to get home to find out.

"Of course they always give the wee bear more soup and mend his chair. They are cross at me 'cause I just won't try their soup and chairs and beds.

"I hope they never will catch me, but I can't help it if they do. I just won't dis-

appoint the little fellow, he is *so* cunning.

"You are cunning, too. You look just like dolls alive. Do you belong to 'Fairy tales every child should know'?"

"Well, I rather guess we do!" replied Rosabell proudly.

"We've been alive for ever so long. We sailed across the ocean to see your Story Island.

"Don't you think we better be going?"

"Probably, I s'pose it is nearly time for the big bear, the middle-sized bear and the wee bear to come walking in that door."

They hastened out of the snug little house, and as they crossed the dooryard

Dinah gasped and pointed up the road, too frightened to speak.

"There they are!" the dollies cried in alarm as they huddled up close to Silver Hair, "what shall we do?"

"Crawl into the oven birds' nests," cried Silver Hair, "while I curl up in this hollow tree. I've hidden here many times."

"I don't go into no oven and be baked like blackbirds in a pie. I'll let the bears eat me first," declared Dinah standing stock-still.

"There's no fire under them," laughed Silver Hair. "Look for a fern lying flat. Underneath is a little warm nest built by the oven birds. It will just fit you."

The dollies each hastened to seek a fern leaf lying flat, and sure enough underneath was a cunning nest for all the world like an oven. In a moment not a dolly was to be seen.

Dinah peered out of her nest to see if Silver Hair were safe, and saw a tiny hand waving from the trunk of a near-by tree.

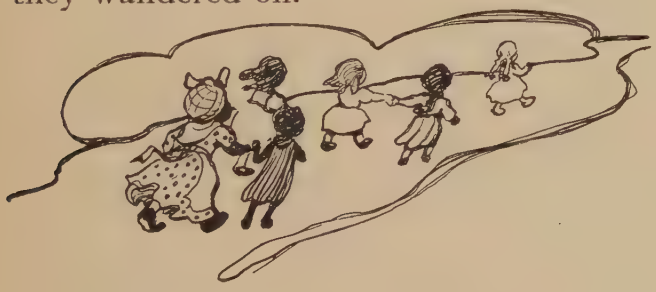
The little girl had wrapped her gray skirts close about her, and really Dinah could hardly tell girl from tree except for the mass of silvery curls.

As Dinah waved a response to the signal, suddenly she felt something move. She suppressed a scream as she saw two sharp beady eyes gazing intently at her.

Then to her great relief she found it was only a little baby frog. She wrapped it carefully in her kerchief, then placed it in her pocket.

At this moment she heard footfalls; first great heavy ones, then lighter gentler ones, then weenty teenty, pitter patter ones, which she knew belonged to the wee bear.

The dollies scarcely dared to breathe till they heard the door of the snug little house close, then out they danced, and after bidding Silver Hair a fond good-by, they wandered on.



CHAPTER IV

"MY, but that was exciting," cried Rosabell. "I had a good look at the bears. They didn't look cross a bit. I believe they think it's fun to go home and see what Silver Hair has been up to.

"What do you s'pose that great long pole is lying on the ground over there?"

"Can't you guess?" asked Silver Bird.

"I can," cried Topsy in the greatest excitement.

"Let me guess it," cried Mirandy, "you never let me speak a word. Is it Jack's bean stalk?"

"It is indeed," replied Silver Bird. "There is the very hatchet he used to cut it down. It's so rusty you would hardly know what it was."

"I see the house where the Giant lived," cried Topsy.

"It's all smashed to flinders. Maybe we can find a gold piece from the money-bags."

"I fear not. Jack took good care of that."

"I'm glad it's all destroyed. You can't even find his awful dungeon."

"Jack lives up the road in that pretty white house. Listen and you will hear the Giant's harp."

They all paused to hear the sweetest of music, then hastened on eager to see this wonderful Jack.

Silver Bird knocked at the door of the white house. It opened, and there stood Jack himself, looking much astonished at the sight of the dolls huddled together in a heap before him, all gazing up at him with such round bright eyes and open mouths.

"Oh!" cried Rosabell, "are you the Jack that planted the bean that grew to a stalk, and then to a house where the Giant lived that you cut down?"

Everybody shouted at this query, and Jack replied:

"I certainly am. Are you the maiden all forlorn who milked the cow with the crumpled horn?"

"Oh, no! I'm only a Live Doll, and these are my friends.

"We should like to know if your story is every bit true? Did it all really happen?"

"It really did. Even to the very end, and here we are, mother and I, living happily forever and ever.

"Next door lives my friend, Jack, the Giant-killer."

"Oh, may we see him, too? Is he the 'fe, fi, fo, fum' one?"

"The very one, but he is away just now. I am sorry for he would love to see you and tell you all about it.

"Come and see my harp and the bags of gold which I took from the Giant."

The dollies gazed at the treasure bags, and listened to the self-playing harp, then on they went.

"I s'pose that 'fe fi fo fum' fellow has gone huntin' more giants," said Topsy as they passed his queer little house.

"Yes," sighed Dinah. "Some people never know when they have enough.

"Oh, see, up on that hill, what a beautiful house!"

"Do you remember Cinderella of glass slipper fame? That is her house and here she comes in her coach and four," said Silver Bird.

The dollies stood at the side of the road for the coach to pass, but Cinderella had spied the tiny people, and ordered the coachman to stop the horses.

She leaned far out the window, smiled, and said:

"Pray tell me who are you? Are you in a fairy story I never read?"

"I s'pect we are," said Dinah, timidly, for she seemed to be the one addressed. "We wuz plain dolls, then the Queen

made us alive, and since then we've been about everythin' even to fairies.

"We're just plain Live Dolls again now, and we came to see the fairy-story people. Are you reely that little ashes-girl?"

"I truly am," laughed Cinderella. "Jump in and you shall see the famous glass slipper. It brought me such good fortune I keep it in a gold case."

The dollies' eyes sparkled as they accepted this generous invitation, and seated themselves in state.

The coach door closed with a bang, the whip cracked, and away dashed the ponies.

"How lovely!" cried Rosabell, with clasped hands. "May we see the ugly sisters, too?"

"Oh, yes," replied their hostess, "but they aren't ugly any more. They were sorry for all that and are very dear and sweet now, as you will see.

"I will also show you my treasure."

"Have you a treasure? All fairy-story people seem to, I notice. It's mostly a room filled with silver and gold. Sometimes it's jewels. How I'd love to sit on a heap of them and watch them slip through my fingers, may I?" asked Rosabell.

"My treasure is much more precious than any of those things."

"Then it's just plain diamonds," cried Mirandy. "They are the most precious things there are. I suppose you ring a bell, and when the man comes you hand

him a gold key, and you say—'Bring me a bucket of diamonds, I want to do some tradin'.' "

A shout of merry laughter followed these droll remarks.

"No," said Cinderella, "it isn't diamonds and it doesn't fill the room either. It is very small and very beautiful. Here we are, and you will soon see for yourselves."

The ponies stopped, the footman opened the coach door, assisted them all out with a most polite bow, then led them up the marble steps. He pressed a button, instantly the crystal door flew open, and Cinderella cried, "Welcome to my home!"

"How beautiful!" they exclaimed, as they gazed in wonder at the luxurious carpets, furniture and decorations.

"Come," cried Cinderella gaily as she led them up the staircase.

They followed her up, up, up, then through winding hallways, till finally she reached a golden door which she opened, as she cried:

"There's my treasure, my jewel that no money can buy!"

They crowded into the room, and she led them to a cradle, where they beheld—what?

Why what would you expect to find in a cradle but a baby! A darling precious baby!

"Isn't she worth more than any jewel in the whole world?" Cinderella asked.

Indeed she was! A beautiful little thing with starry eyes, pink cheeks and golden curls.

Such a fat little dumpling she was that they all begged to hold her. Cinderella allowed this, and after each had had her turn, took them to see the glass slipper.

"It doesn't fit any more," she said. "I'm not quite so tiny as I was when I was an ash girl.

"Now come to the dining-room and let me give you some refreshments."

Would wonders never cease? Think of dining with Cinderella!

She seated them in a room filled with

the odor of the sweetest flowers. In a moment came to their ears fairy music. As they listened entranced the servant placed before them golden bowls of broth.

Here Dinah had *such* a thing happen. She pulled her kerchief from her pocket, and therefrom hopped the frog she had found in the oven bird's nest.

It hopped straight into the broth, splashed about for a moment as though it were taking its morning bath, then out on to the table-cloth.

The dolls gazed appalled. *What* a *dreadful* thing to happen!

Cinderella bubbled over with laughter as she beheld the frog's antics and the frightened faces about the table.

Then she took the little wet creature in her hand, dried it and looked intently at its back.

Then she quickly cried, "Where did you find him? He's been lost for days. He's one of my beloved pages."

"How can you tell he's yours, and how can a frog be a page?" asked Dinah, delighted at this turn of affairs.

"A little old man in the woods gave him a wand. He can be anything he wants to be. I know he's mine because my coat of arms is stamped on his back. It's on everything I possess. See!"

They all looked and saw very clearly imprinted on the little back, a tiny slipper.

"Dinah must have the reward. I have offered one for weeks."

Dinah was so overcome at the news she could scarcely eat the second bowl of broth placed before her.

After they had finished the bountiful meal of broiled chicken, golden brown potatoes, rolls, and ice-cream in the form of slippers, their hostess took them through the Palace, then left them in the Sunshine room.

Here they found a dear little page, all dressed in black velvet trimmed with silver buttons. His feet were gaily shod in black velvet slippers with enormous silver buckles.

Dinah stared at him, then cried: "Are

you the 'Frog who would a-wooing go'?"

"Yes," said the page, "and do you know how I came to be in that oven nest?

"A little girl saw me hopping, and she followed me for miles, saying, 'Dump aden toad! Dump aden toad!' at each hop. I got so tired. I wanted to get back to my brook, but at last I jumped into the oven bird's nest and she couldn't find me.

"I was just thinking I'd come out when you crept in."

"How funny!" cried Mirandy. "I'd like to have seen you obeyin' that little girl. Where do you s'pose Cinderella is?"

"She's gone to get the reward," cried Dinah, quivering with excitement.

"Won't you let me hold it sometimes?" asked Topsy wistfully. "I never did find a frog and get a reward."

"Poor little thing!" murmured Cinderella, who appeared just in time to hear this last remark.

"You, too, shall have a reward. I have decided to give you each one, for really in a way you all found the frog."

As she spoke she gave to each a beautiful opal box.

"Press the gold button—so."

As they obeyed the lids popped open, and oh! oh! what do you s'pose they saw?

A weenty teenty gold slipper studded with bright jewels hanging from a slender chain.

"Why do you give us these lovely things?" asked Rosabell.

"Because," said Cinderella, "you have rendered me a great service.

"I am very fond of the little page. He is a very important part of my household. This is the second time he has played this prank. The last time he decided to be a bird and was almost killed by a hunter. The wand is hardly a safe toy for him and I shall destroy it now.

"I can never thank you enough for bringing him home. I hope you will have much pleasure wearing the pendant slippers.

"I am going to give you a rare experience now."

She delivered a whispered message to a page who now appeared. He led them out the crystal door, down the steps, where they found—now *what* do you think?

Nothing more nor less than the pumpkin coach drawn by the dappled mouse-colored ponies, with the six footmen gravely awaiting their pleasure.

They climbed into the coach, the chains clanked, and with a flourish of the whip they departed in a cloud of dust.

"My!" exclaimed Rosabell, "I feel almost as though we had seen the fairy godmother."

"Me, too," cried Dinah. "Look at my feet, Topsy; have my shoes turned to glass slippers?"

"Indeed not. The only slipper I see is that lovely reward around your neck."

"I'm glad of it. I've had enough trouble with my feet since I've been alive. I don't want to wind up with no prince runnin' after me. I'm satisfied to be just what I is,—a plain no-count cullod doll. What *are* we stoppin' at?"

Somehow their dappled ponies had flown over the ground like magic, for they now found themselves miles away from the Palace.

The footman helped them out, politely touched his cap, and left them gazing in surprise at the strange house before them.

In one corner was a watch-tower, which

was built so high it seemed as though one could see almost all over the world from its top.

"Do you know whose house this is?" asked Silver Bird.

No one could guess.

"Think a moment. See the tower,—who went up to watch? Can't you just hear the voice calling: 'Sister Anne, *do* you see anybody coming?' "

"Mercy me!" cried Dinah in alarm. "You don ketch me goin' in here. That's Bluebeard's!"

"Yes, but he was killed, you know. His wife still lives here and is very happy. You better come and see it! It is well worth while."

He led them up the board walk, and tapped at the great heavy door.

It was opened by a sweet-faced lady, who looked with surprise at her odd visitors, but politely asked them in.

"We are on a visit to your island and we very much wanted to see Bluebeard's house, and to ask you if it is all really true?"

Mrs. Bluebeard laughed heartily as she replied, "Yes, my dears, it is true, but I'm so happy I never think of it. Come in and I will show you about."

And so they followed her up-stairs and down, gazing in awe at the silk and satin draperies, the gold and silver dishes, and the gorgeous furniture.

When they reached the private staircase which led to the forbidden closet, they all hung back, but their hostess cried:

"Oh, my dearies, you will see nothing bad there. I think it is a beautiful room!

"You see the door isn't even locked. I threw the rusty old key into the river. Look!"

She threw open the door and they beheld a perfect bower; flowering plants, vines running over the walls, birds darting hither and thither, caroling and twittering their joyous music, while the air was heavy with the perfume of the rare blossoms.

"You see nothing but life here. Now come up in the tower and I will show you

where Sister Anne watched for me that dreadful day!"

They climbed up, up, till they reached the watch-tower, from which they could really see for miles and miles.

"Would you like to look through my telescope while I go down and feed my birds?"

"Yes, indeed!" cried the dollies.

And so they gazed, one after another through the big glass which made everything seem so near.

As Rosabell turned it first in one direction then in another, she suddenly became wild with excitement.

"Silver Bird, look quick!" she cried.

Silver Bird did look, to see far away

across the water a sandy beach. Here were children running about in great distress.

He turned the glass till he could see easily the expressions on the anxious faces.

"They are our mothers," cried Rosabell, "and they have just found out that we have gone away in the boats. We must go back this minute!"

"We can't," said Silver Bird, "the wind has died down."

"Oh!" cried Rosabell, "we must do something. We can't let them think we are drowned!

"Think! All of you think hard and quick!"

The sudden silence that followed was broken by Dinah, who suddenly cried:

"What's dat I done hearn tell about birds carryin' messages? We can tie a letter to Silver Bird's wing, when I turn him to a bird with my wand. He can just fly over there and drop it in somebody's lap. They'll feel quite sot up over it!"

"Indeed they will. You are a jewel, Dinah, to think of it. Let's go ask Mrs. Bluebeard for paper and pencil."

And so in a few minutes this letter was tied to Silver Bird's wing:

"Dear mothers:

"We are safe. We sailed away in the shoe boats. Silver Bird has been showing us interesting places. I don't know how we saw so many in such a little time but we did. I s'pose

it's like when you dream of going to the moon and back in one minute. You do but you don't know why.

"We can't come back yet because the wind has died down. When it dies up again we can.

"While we wait we are going to see more things. Perhaps you can come, too. I wish't you could.

"Good-by with love and kisses from all.

"THE LIVE DOLLS."

As Silver Bird sailed away, Mrs. Bluebeard clapped her hands crying, "It's like a matinée. Tell me about it."

"We will, but mayn't we first watch through the glass? I want to see our mothers get glad."

"Indeed, yes. I want to see, too. This is the next act of the play, I suppose, and we mustn't miss it."

They hurried up the stairway, and in turn watched through the telescope to see Silver Bird sailing on and on.

"Brave little bird! How fast he goes!" cried their hostess. "Now he is just above them. Now he darts down and oh, do see! he has perched on a shoulder of one of the girls.

"See the others gather about her. Now they are taking the letter, and are reading it.

"See how happy they are. Do tell me about it! Are you rehearsing for a play? Let's sit down in a circle and you tell me about it.

"You seem such a queer lot of little people; almost like some dolls I used to have.

If it were possible I would say you were a lot of dolls come to life."

"That's just what we are!" chorused the dolls.

And then they told her the whole story from beginning to end, and wound up by telling their last escapade with the little shoe boats.

As the tale was finished, Lady Bluebeard laughed so hard the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"My!" she said, "how I wish I were a little girl again and could play with a Live Doll."

"I think we must go," said Rosabell. "Thank you so much for showing us your house.

THE LIVE DOLLS

"If you ever *do* come to Cloverdale we will show you our doll house where all these things we have told about happened."

Much amused the lady opened the big heavy door, and away they went.

CHAPTER V

"MY!" sighed Dinah, "just think how many times that awful blue-whiskered man has tromped up and down these steps. I'm glad he's out of the way!"

As they wandered on they found it was growing dark.

"Where shall we go to wait for Silver Bird?" asked Mirandy.

"Let's go over to that hill beside that high mountain. It looks so pretty with punkins planted on the side of it!" cried Topsy.

And so the dollies skipped along the dusty road, into a meadow and up one hill and down another until they reached the top of *the* hill, the whole side of which was everywhere dotted with fat yellow pumpkins.

As they stood for a moment in the dusk, the big round moon rose and bathed the scene in its glorious light.

"Listen!" cried Topsy, "what's comin'?"

As they listened they heard the tread of some sort of creature.

"Look! comin' down that other hill this way!"

They all gazed appalled to see ambling toward them a gray wolf.

"Where *can* we hide?" they cried.

"Here's a churn standing behind this stump. I bet it's the one the Little Red Hen rolled down in when she went from the fair and the wolf was looking for her. Jump in quick!"

In a jiffy they were inside, holding tight to the dasher.

As they waited breathlessly, they heard

the wolf coming nearer and nearer. When he reached the churn he pawed it around till it turned over on its side, and down the hill it rolled.

Mr. Wolf jumped atop of it, and a weird ride they had in the moonlight.

When they reached the bottom he sniffed about the lid, then giving the churn a push he left it and went his way.

"My!" said Dinah, as they crept from their hiding-place, "I *was* skeered that time!

"He's the very one, I'm sure, who was always trying to get the Little Red Hen. I can just hear him say, 'I'll puff and I'll puff till I blow your house in.' "

"He can't be that one," said Mirandy.

"He fell down the chimney into the pot of water."

"Well, then, he came alive again," declared Dinah, "for he looks just like the picture."

"Never mind about the wolf. Come and see these queer pumpkins; they *look* like houses!" whispered Rosabell.

"They *are* really and truly houses!" they all cried, "and no one in them!"

And sure enough they were; all furnished with cook stove, bed, chairs, and everything that goes to make up a home. Some one lived there, and those some ones were certainly very orderly, for everything was as neat as a pin.

A tiny broom stood in a corner, the

floors were as clean as a whistle, and the beds were made up without a wrinkle.

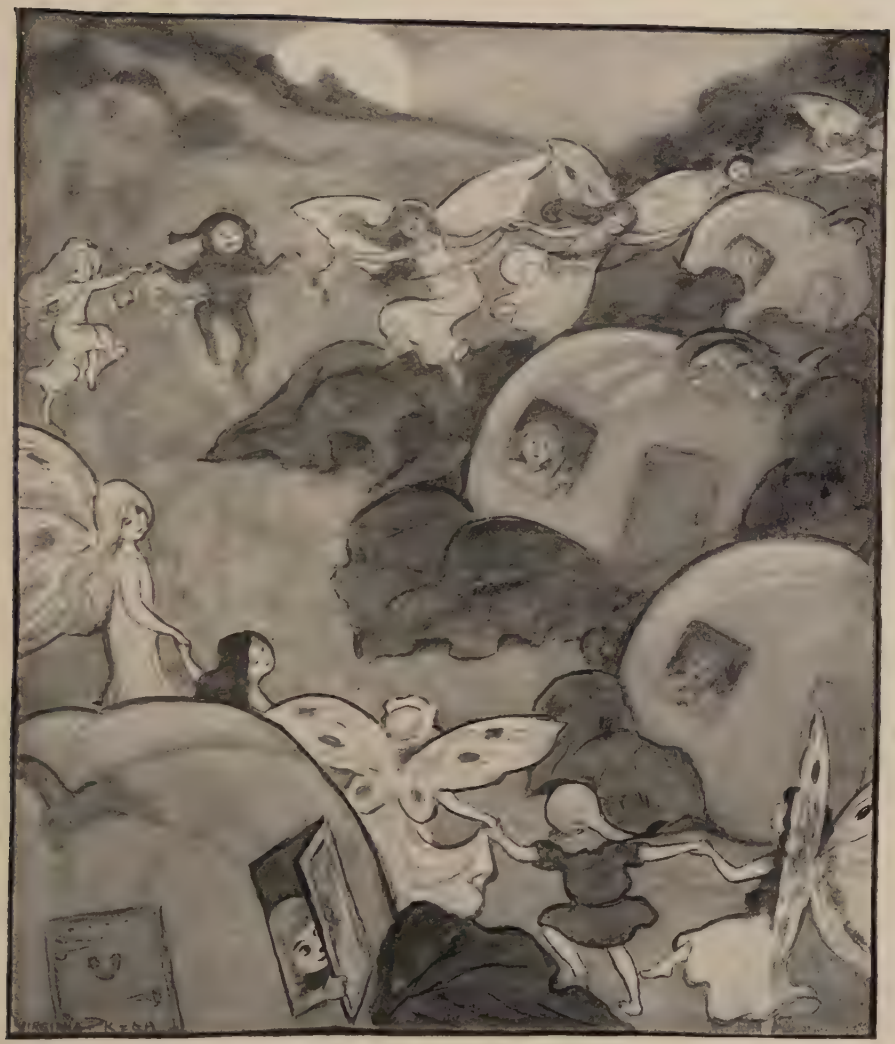
"I'm *so* sleepy, do you s'pose we could go to bed? We'd just fit them," said Mirandy wistfully.

"I think we might," said Rosabell, unable to resist the fluffy beds.

And so each dolly was soon sound asleep, with her pumpkin door securely hooked and bolted, while the moon shone in through the tiny window, on the dollies' faces pillowed on the round fat arms.

Suddenly they were awakened by fairy music.

They all sprang from their beds and peered through the tiny window to see—such *a* sight!



A circle of fairies danced in the moonlight

A circle of fairies dancing in the moonlight, all gowned in shimmering silver!

Presently the music changed to a sighing as of wind in the tree-tops, then the fairy who seemed to be the head of the band, stepped from the ring and waved on high a silver key.

The music now changed to a weird march as the fairies formed in line and marched to a clump of bushes which grew very near to the pumpkin house.

The dolls watched entranced at the scene, to see the fairy pause in front of the bushes, and pull them aside, disclosing a massive stone.

She inserted the key in a lock, turned it, and the stone swung outward.

Then came to their ears a sweet chime of bells, and then from the door rushed a troop of rosy-cheeked children garbed in curious quaint gowns.

The door clanked behind them, and the children gathered about the fairy and seemed to be listening to her counsel.

"Where is the Pied Piper?" asked the Fairy Captain.

"Sound asleep!" cried the children in chorus.

"Can we go home to our mothers to-night?" asked one wistful-faced baby.

"You may, for I have at last the money your parents owed him for piping the rats away.

"I'm going to leave the bag of gold inside the cavern."

With these words she again unlocked the stone door, and with the help of her band the bag was placed inside, the door clanked, and the key turned.

"Now," said the Fairy Captain, "you are safe. He never can pipe you away again because we have his pipe and have buried it deep, deep, deep.

"Would you rather sleep with us here in our pumpkin houses to-night, or shall we take you home at once?"

The dolls waited breathlessly for the reply, and much relieved they were when the children begged to go home at once.

"But how will you get us there?" asked the wistful one.

"Do you see that the ground is covered with dry curled-up leaves?" asked the Fairy Captain. "We shall transform you into fairies, and these brown leaves will infold you, then you will be perfectly safe. No one would think of looking for the Children of Hamelin in dried curled-up leaves.

"Then a wonderful thing will happen!"

And to a gay little tune the fairy wands flashed in the moonlight, while the children grew smaller and smaller. A gust of wind blew the brown leaves about them, and in a twinkling each fairy was garbed in a little brown coat.

They looked so cunning with their tiny heads peeping out of the wee hoods that the dollies gazed spellbound.

Suddenly a clanking sound came to their ears. The big stone gate opened slowly, and there stood the strangest apparition!

"His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin.

. . . . . .

"And here they noticed around his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end—"

Where there should have been a pipe there was none.

"Where is my pipe, and where are my children?" he thundered forth.

But nothing was to be heard but the sighing wind whistling about his head.

"I could stand it to lose the children, but, oh, my pipe!" he wailed.

"I don't care for the gold they left. All the gold in the world can't replace my pipe."

"And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing."

"I know I was wrong to take their children, but why didn't they keep their promise?" he continued sadly.

The only reply heard was the song of the wind rising higher and higher, rolling

the leaves along gently at first, then faster and faster, and as they swirled out of sight a silvery laugh floated back and was echoed and reechoed by the hills.

The old man pondered for a moment, then cried in dispair:

"Since my music is gone there is nothing left for me here; I'll go back to my cavern."

He turned and disappeared, the stone gate clanked behind him, the key turned and all was silent.

After talking over this unusual entertainment, each dolly returned to her bed and slept till awakened by the shrill note of a bird.

Rosabell hastened to her window to see

Silver Bird perched on a branch of a near-by bush.

Dinah, too, heard his welcome tones, and hastened to wave her wand, while the dollies all rushed to the spot eager to hear the news.

"Tell us about it; were our mothers frightened?" they cried.

"Well, a little at first," replied Silver Bird, "and when they found where you were they wanted to follow, of course, and so they are coming."

"But how can they come?"

"That's what I'm so eager to tell you; *such* a strange thing happened! You will hardly believe it!

"As they sat on the shore in the moon-

light talking over the letter, suddenly we all heard a strange humming sound as of wailing wind; higher and higher it rose whistling about our heads.

"Then came scurrying toward us a swirl of dead leaves. They fairly seemed alive as they scampered to the shore's edge, and there paused as though awaiting something, while the music continued as of winds sighing through the tree-tops.

"As we stood watching the silver path made by the moon away out on the water, suddenly at the far end of that path appeared a tiny speck. It grew larger and larger, and presently we saw that it was a whale.

"As it drew nearer the brown leaves

rustled and seemed to huddle closely together in one tight clump.

"Mr. Whale came straight up on to the sand, paused in front of the Queen, bowed and asked her if she had summoned him.

"She nodded, and pointed mysteriously toward the clump of dead leaves.

"With a knowing look he cried questioningly, 'So? Well, then, I'm off for a journey. Can I take you with me?'

" 'Indeed, yes. Children, this is Good Kind Whale. He offers to take us for a ride. You can ride as mermaids on his back. He will take you to Mother Goose village, then leave you on Story Island. Will you go?'

"Mermaids they were wild to be, of

course, and so in a moment they were changed into the dearest little silvery-tailed, golden-haired creatures you ever saw.

"With shouts of joy they clambered on to Good Kind Whale's back.

"In some strange way the dried leaves were hidden under his fins.

"Then, lashing his tail and spouting the water all over his guests, away they went, while the children shouted with laughter.

"The Queen will show them the places we have already visited," said Silver Bird, "and while they are doing that I want to take you to a most unusual place. Then we will meet them and all go home to-

gether. I wonder if we can find anything to eat here?"

"Indeed, yes," cried Dinah. "I have found berries, honey and milk."

And, seated on mushrooms, they feasted on these goodies.

"There was one thing I didn't understand," said Silver Bird, as they ate their breakfast, "and that was about those dried leaves."

"We do!" cried the dollies. "We know all about it!"

"You do!" cried Silver Bird in amazement. "Tell me about it."

And thereupon the dolls related the strange story of the midnight fairy dance.

"You know," said Rosabell, "it was the

Pied Piper and the children he piped away."

"Who was the Pied Piper?" asked Silver Bird, much interested.

"Why, don't you know? He piped away the rats from the village of Hamelin. Then the people refused to pay him what they had promised, and he charmed away the children for revenge. I know it by heart. Listen!

" 'Ere he blew three notes. . . .
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.

THE LIVE DOLLS

All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

. . . . . .

When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide.

. . . . . .

The Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast."

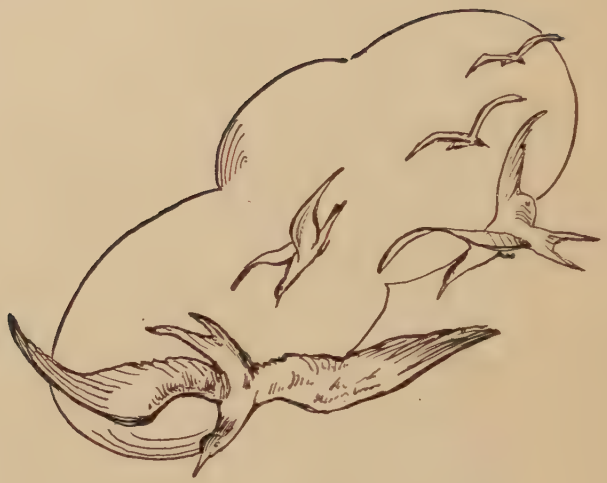
"All but one little lame boy who could not dance all the way, and he went back and told all about it.

"And so, you see, there is the very mountain where they have been shut in all this

time. I'm glad we happened to see them when they came out."

"And I am glad to hear this interesting story," said Silver Bird.

"Now, we will bid good-by to your pumpkin houses and start on our journey."



CHAPTER VI

"IN order that you may go with me in the easiest way I shall have to change you into silver birds. I also have a wand to use on special occasions. One wave will turn you into the dearest little birds you ever saw."

"What fun!" exclaimed the dolls much excited.

"We've been flying fairies, but never did we be birds. Can we still talk?" questioned Dinah.

"Of course. Birds have a language just as people do.

"Now remember this: as we fly don't lose sight of me. You will all be much smaller so you can't mistake me for one of your number. Are you ready?"

The dollies nodded, and Silver Bird drew forth a silver feather.

"I found this on my way back. I lost it long ago, and I was glad, indeed, to see it lodged on a branch of a tree."

As he spoke he swept it through the air,

and dear me! I wish you could have seen the silvery creatures trying their wings.

"Follow me!" chirped their leader.

They flapped their wings, then up above the tree-tops they soared and sailed gracefully across the sky. On and on they flew till presently they saw below them the blue sea dotted by fairy boats.

As they darted down and settled upon the boats they found them to be of glittering ice, in all sorts of shapes.

Some looked like tiny boats, others like churches with steeples. Castles, too, appeared. All were of a beautiful icy blue.

"Aren't they wonderful! What are they?" cried one and another as they found

themselves carried along on those strange creations.

"To people they are icebergs broken from the glaciers above. Silver Birds only know what they really are.

"What seems to be a glacier is simply an immense Ice Palace where Jack Frost and his Elves live.

"These are their boats. If you had ever been up here on a steamer you would have noticed these wee boats covered with silver birds. They are Jack Frost's messengers.

"Jack Frost and his Elves can not leave their home, they are so busy. So the birds go about for them. It is so easy for us to skim across the sky."

"But what do you do for them?" queried Rosabell.

"I'll show you presently, and since you have joined the ranks of Silver Birds you also will be put to work."

"Oh!" cried Topsy, "it's going to be such fun! Do tell me how to clap my hands when I haven't any to clap."

"Flap your wings, goosey," cried Dinah.

A great flapping of wings followed this remark, for they were all delighted over the prospect before them.

They clung with their claws to the ice boats that glided silently and swiftly on their way.

Presently it grew dark; then the moon appeared.

"See!" cried Rosabell, "the man in the moon is smiling at us. He's thinking of our ride in the moon boat I s'pose."

"Oh! Isn't it lovely! Everything glistens in this silvery light."

"The stars are *so* bright and clear."

"Oh! Oh! Is that the Ice Palace where Jack Frost lives?"

"I never saw anything so lovely. Do see the starry lights twinkling in the windows!"

"And what are those funny little people tumbling about on the ice? Are they Live Dolls, too? Aren't they cunning in those blue suits trimmed with white fur!" cried the various Silver Birds.

"They are the Frost Elves," replied Sil-

ver Bird. "I shall now make you into dolls again. They are so proud of themselves I want them to see they aren't the only tiny people in the world. See! They have discovered us!"

Sure enough the little blue-coated creatures now gathered about their leader, who pointed toward the boats, then seemed to give an order.

They all disappeared only to reappear harnessed in pairs, drawing a queer sled which looked like a mammoth skate.

"They are going to draw us up," cried Silver Bird, flashing his wand.

"Jump for the shore. We will have great fun now!"

The dolls, much excited, watched the

strange sled come swiftly toward them. As it stopped the Elves rolled off and in piping voices cried:

"Hurrah! What have we here?" as they gazed curiously at the Live Dolls.

"Oh," replied Silver Bird, "they are our guests from Cloverdale. They wanted to see your Ice Palace and so I brought them.

"Of course we came as birds, but they are really Live Dolls and I knew you would love to see them as they are."

"Indeed, yes, we are delighted to meet you!" cried the Elves with bashful bows.

"Lucky you came, Silver Bird," cried the leader of the band, "we were about to

send for you. We have an order for the biggest storm of the season. The other bands are all out, so you must summon your helpers."

"Good news!" said Silver Bird. "I have a band right with me. They will like nothing better than to help me."

"We are very pleased to welcome you to our house," said the leader with a profound curtsy; "if you will be seated on the sledge my Merry Men will draw you up to the Palace."

The dolls hastened to obey, and the Merry Men drew them up the icy path to the sound of jingling bells and tooting horns.

As they neared the home of Jack Frost

"We are very pleased to welcome you"

they were entranced at the picture spread out before them.

The silver moonbeams clothed the Palace in a soft tender light, while the hundreds of windows twinkled like so many stars. The whole building seemed enveloped in an icy fretwork of fern leaves and twigs, which, with the windows, were covered with a thick hoar frost.

"Welcome to our home!" cried the Elves as they paused before steps cut out in a mammoth block of ice, leading up to the broad door.

"Come in and sup with us. Then you can look through the Palace while we fill the storm clouds."

The dolls, eager to see the wonders of this strange place, followed the Elves up the steps.

As they entered the door some one blew a trumpet, then was heard a silvery chime of bells which echoed and reechoed throughout the mammoth building.

They were ushered into a large room, where before the crackling fire was seated—Jack Frost,—sound asleep!

They tiptoed up to his chair, gazing curiously at the little fellow who had wrought such beautiful pictures, and done such wonderful deeds all over the world.

They watched him sleeping peacefully, garbed in blue clothes with white fur trimming, and could hardly believe they were

really in the presence of such a noted being.

As they turned from him they saw in front of the fire a long table ready spread for a meal.

Such a room they had never beheld! The walls were trimmed with frosted branches of holly, while the ceiling seemed crystallized and studded with rubies.

"Are they really rubies?" asked Rosabell, gazing in awe at the sight.

"Oh, no," laughed the Elves. "They are holly berries stuck deep in the frost."

Just here Jack sprang to his feet, crying, "Sit up, sit up, and we will sup. Why, whom have we here?" he added in surprise.

THE LIVE DOLLS

"The Live Dolls from Cloverdale, your Majesty," came in loud tones from a page at the end of the room.

"Indeed! Well, right glad am I to see you. Sup with us and tell me all about yourselves."

The dollies were soon seated about the board, much interested in all that went on about them.

"See the napkins," whispered Mirandy, "and the table-cloth. They look like frosted window-panes covered with a scrollwork of ferns. I wonder if they'll give us frozen food!"

But indeed they didn't. They had hot oyster soup, such as they never tasted;

then roasted birds with jelly, vegetables and jam tarts.

As they ate they told Jack Frost of many of their experiences.

He laughed heartily over Dinah's feat, and seemed much interested in all they related.

"Now," he said as they rose from the table, "I shall show you the wonders of my home," and he took them into every nook and corner.

"We fill the clouds from these rooms according to the sort of weather desired."

As he spoke, he opened one door labeled "Wind." Such a swirl met them that they had hard work to keep their footing,

and dear little Mirandy was blown over, upside down.

"Pardon me, madam," apologized the little fellow with twinkling eyes, as he righted her and opened another door.

"Here we store barrels of sleet, snow and hail.

"Here, also, we keep the thick feathery frost which you often find coating everything on wintry mornings. It is hard work to bring out those plumy effects.

"I send hundreds of my messengers, and they work all night with their brushes. I have one little chap who is an expert at frosting windows. I never allow him to do anything else. He never paints two windows alike. He is certainly a wonder!

"The Elves do this work and the Silver Birds carry the clouds for storms.

"In this room is rain, and here is a pretty room, see!"

As he opened this door a shower of tiny dewdrops fell upon them.

"See, they look like jewels. They glisten on the cobwebs, if you look early enough in the morning for them, like a mass of diamonds. These go out every night in summer.

"Here is one of the most beautiful rooms we have," and he threw open a wide door, much pleased over the admiration now expressed by all, for what do you s'pose they saw? An oval room arched with rainbows, hundreds of them, beauti-

ful prisms of color just waiting to be called for.

Last, but not least, they were shown the Sunshine Room, which so dazzled their eyes they were glad when the door was closed.

"You see we keep bottled up here all sorts of weather for all parts of the world. It keeps us all busy, too. The rain must not freeze and the ice must not melt.

"The wind must not blow away, nor must it blow us away. We keep that in what we call the Strong Room.

"Near that is the Thunder and Lightning Room. The thunder roars and the lightning flashes most of the time. The

walls and floors are padded so we don't notice it.

"Then we have a Fog Room, the thickest kind, just on purpose for London. They never seem to have enough of that. I won't open that door, it is so nasty.

"The thing I like best to send out is just a good old-fashioned rain cloud followed by the little fellows who plant the rainbows. They revel in it, and do you know, those dear little chaps always keep their promises. I s'pose it is on account of handling those beautiful arches of color which really mean a promise kept, you remember.

"Now come and watch the Storm Cloud

being filled. We are just about to send it out. See out this window, that bulgy purple cloud. The wind is rushing into it. It sort of infolds a number of smaller clouds which are filled to the brim with rain, snow and sleet.

"I believe you are to help to deliver this order, and so you will have to be on your way. Good-by and good luck to you."

As they in turn grasped Jack's hand, Silver Bird appeared crying; "Are you ready?"

They nodded, the wand waved, and in a moment the Silver Birds were all stationed about the big blue cloud, grasping its edge with their beaks.

"Now—away—we go!"

And away they flew on the wildest race they ever had.

As they soared along the wind began to "wooh" about their heads; louder and louder it wailed.

"Here's the place," chirped Silver Bird. "It said in the almanac—'A storm is due here about this time,' so they have to have it. Shake the cloud, gently at first."

One shake brought forth a burst of rain, which the wind blew in every direction.

Another shake turned the rain to sleet, which coated everything it touched.

"Now give it a good hard one!" cried Silver Bird.

Such fun as they had now watching the

snowflakes fall. First they were large, almost like feathers. Then they grew smaller, and fell so fast that the world below soon looked like a big frosted cake.

"How do the flakes get to be such pretty shapes? I never saw such pretty things!" said Rosabell.

"We'll take back the empty cloud and I'll show you," replied Silver Bird.

A rollicking time they had on the return trip as they took turns riding in the cloud, which was like a great down quilt. It finally landed them on the roof of the Ice Palace, which they found was formed of myriads of icy molds. With the big magnifying-glass they saw the snowflakes

being cut out by machinery from frosty bits taken from the ice piled all about.

"As they are cut, you see they fall below into clouds suspended there for that purpose.

"In this corner they are cutting hail and sleet. That is made from clear ice."

"How do the fairy forms stay in shape? They are all different and perfect as they fall; how do they do it?" cried Rosabell, much puzzled.

"Did you ever notice rice after it's cooked? If it is properly cooked each grain keeps its shape. If not, it is all a sticky mass.

"These flakes are properly taken care of, that's why they are so beautiful.

THE LIVE DOLLS

Everything Jack Frost does is properly done, and so you see perfect results. Remember that when you look at the exquisite flakes on your coats.

"Now we must bid good-by to Jack and his Elves and be on our way."

CHAPTER VII

AS they left the Palace they were much surprised to receive tiny gifts from Mr. Frost. These were the dearest little snowflake pins you ever saw, and so if you ever see a doll wearing one you will know it is one of the

real original Live Dolls of Cloverdale.

With merry farewells, the dollies seated themselves on the sled and whizzed down the hill to their iceberg boats.

When they were comfortably placed on them the Elves pushed them out with long poles, and at once they were on their homeward voyage.

"That was grand!" cried one and all.

"After this, when the wind blows or the snow falls, I'll think of the dear little birds high up shaking the clouds, and when I see the frosted windows I'll have great fun tracing the pictures to see if there are two alike," said Rosabell.

They had hardly finished talking it all over when the little boats touched the

other shore. The Silver Birds spread their wings and as before rose up high in the heavens.

They sailed on and on till they saw below them their mothers seated under a big elm tree.

These same mothers were suddenly much surprised to find the branches above them filled with birds.

"See!" cried Janie, "a flock of birds like our beautiful Silver Bird has settled in this tree."

"Now they are flying down, and—why they aren't birds, they are our precious dolls!"

There was much rejoicing now while all tried to tell their adventures at once.

The mothers were amazed to hear where the dolls had been, and wanted to know all about this unusual ice world, while the dolls were eager to know how the mothers liked the Islands.

"Did you see Cinderella and her wonderful pumpkin coach, and the Mother Goose people?"

"Did the three blind mice run after you, and were the tarts good that the Queen made?"

Such a hubbub was never heard in that meadow before.

Dinah cried in disappointed tones, "I thought you had silver tails and golden hair hanging down your backs!"

"We did, but that's only when we go

to sea. We're all going to be that way as we go home!" replied Janie.

"Oh!" exclaimed Dinah, "me, too? I never had golden hair in all my life, nor did I ever feel hair on my back!"

"Yes, you and Topsy both," said the little Queen. "Mr. Good Kind Whale is even now waiting. His broad back is the best place I know of to ride on."

"But how shall we get our shoe boats home? They, too, are waiting on the beach. We can't leave them, they are such fun!" said Rosabell anxiously.

"Oh, we'll tie the ropes to Mr. Whale's tail. We'll make a fine procession. The steamers will all flock around us to see what we are!"

As they talked they wandered along toward the shore, and presently they saw the gleam of the sea and Good Kind Whale patiently awaiting them.

The dolls huddled close to their mothers as the critical moment had now arrived, and Rosabell whispered, "How does it feel to be a mermaid?"

"Just like so!" gaily cried the Queen, waving her wand, and there they were mermaids climbing on to the whale's back.

Silver Bird, his own splendid beautiful self, perched on the whale's head, and with the fleet of shoe boats following in their wake, away they went.

Good Kind Whale spouted the water high above their heads, and it showered

down on them amid shrieks of laughter.

He lashed his tail so hard that Dinah declared had the water been cream they would probably have been floating about on butter pats. As it was, the water foamed up about them till it seemed as though his tail must be made of soap.

A rollicking time they had on this journey, and wonderful things did they see!

Good Kind Whale took them down where they found strange creatures sailing about midst tangles of seaweed and sunken boats.

Here they saw, also, splendid vessels beaten to pieces, stranded on rocks, treasure laden, waiting to be found.

As the sun went down into the sea, he showed them the great ball of fire sinking to its rest.

"Why don't we get some place to sleep?" asked Janie suppressing a yawn.

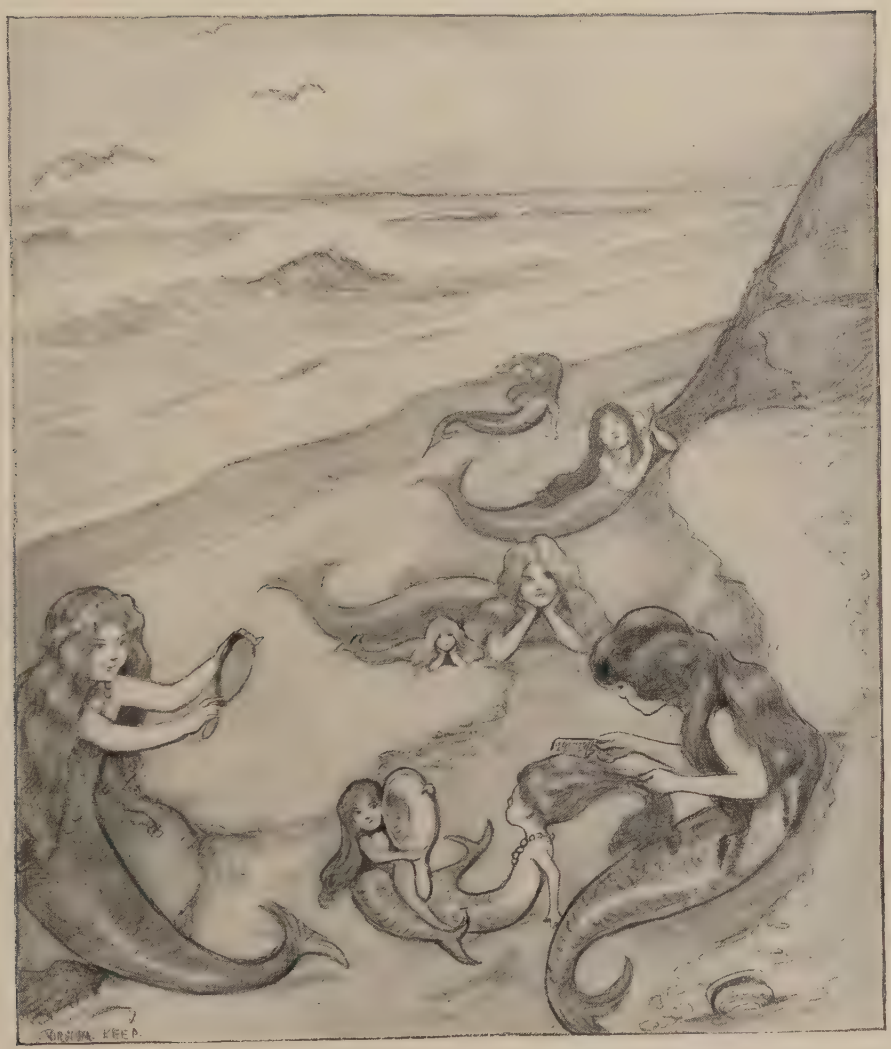
"That's just where we are going this instant. See!" And he landed them on a beach covered with sea shells.

"Every little mermaid has a sea shell all its own," sang the Queen.

"Curl up in them and go to sleep. They are the dearest little pearly lined beds you ever slept in."

"But won't the tide come in and wash us out?"

"I'll see that it doesn't," said Good Kind Whale. And so he did. His great body



They flapped their silvery tails and brushed their golden locks

kept back the tide so that the water only lazily lapped the shells, rocking the mermaids to sleep with the drowsiest of tunes.

The rosy dawn awakened them, and they flapped their silvery tails while they brushed their golden locks with sea moss.

As they gobbled up the tiny sea-urchins with which the beach was sprinkled, Good Kind Whale cried:

"Now it's time to go home, are you ready?"

"We are," cried one and all, and then Rosabell summoned courage to question him about the leaf-coated fairies.

"Please tell us, before we start, Mr. Good Kind Whale, *did* the Children of Hamelin find their mothers?"

"Indeed they did, but how did you know about them?" he asked in surprise.

"Oh, we know all about them. We saw them all turned into fairies, and wrapped in their leafy coats.

"And we saw the Pied Piper! *What* do you think of that?"

"Well! well! Not many have had that great privilege. No one around here has ever seen the Pied Piper, nor the Children, either, since they followed his weird music that day. He could charm everybody and everything with his mysterious melodies.

"Do you know, if he came along here playing his pipe we would all follow him. We just couldn't help it.

"A strange procession there would be of all the little creatures of the sea trailing along behind us.

"Let us hope he will never find his pipe if he should come out of his cavern.

"Now I want to tell you about the Children of Hamelin.

"When we arrived at their village a wonderful sight it was to see those curled leaves suddenly transformed into children. You know how from the cocoon suddenly there springs forth a gorgeous butterfly? Well it was something the case here.

"The little brown-coated things were huddled together in a heap on the shore, and all at once from that heap there sprang

a lot of children tumbling over one another in their haste to find their mothers.

"Such rejoicing it would be hard to find anywhere on this big round earth.

"And now if you are quite ready we will go on. We are not far from your beach, and if I am not sadly mistaken, there are some mothers awaiting you who will be almost, if not quite as pleased to see you."

And so they went on their way, feeling both sorry and glad. Sorry that these wonderful times were at an end, and glad, too, for of course they must end so that new times could begin.

They were soon landed on their own little beach, and as they thanked Good

Kind Whale, they cried regretfully, "Won't you take us again some day? It has been such fun!"

"It will be my greatest pleasure," he replied, and with a most polite bow he left them.

The mermaids were now transformed into little girls and Live Dolls. And Silver Bird poised himself above them for a moment with outspread wings, then flapping them vigorously, he, too, left them, after receiving many hearty thanks and farewell messages.

They watched him till he became a mere speck in the sky. Then with a sigh of regret, they took their little boats and turned to go to their homes.

"Why do you sigh?" asked the Queen. "Haven't you had a good time?"

"So good that we do not want to have it stop!" cried her audience.

"It isn't going to stop. It's going on and on.

"Some of these days you will hear a whirring, and see a silvery flash above your heads, then Silver Bird will appear.

"Next you will see a stream of water spouting high in the air, and you will know it is Good Kind Whale coming your way.

"Then suddenly you will hear the silver trumpet, and there beside you I will stand.

"Oh, there are a great many things in

store for you, when Good Kind Whale, Silver Bird and I meet again. And now good-by and remember—you know I always keep my promise."

And with this glad message ringing in their ears, the children and Live Dolls hastened home, each eager to tell mother all about it.

The End